

Tehillim / Psalms 57 | ספר תהילים נז

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In the Shadow of the Wings

This week's study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 57:1-11*, the psalm opens saying, **א לְמַנְצַחַת אֶל-תַּשְׁחַת לְדָוִד** *For the choir director; set to Al-tashheth. A Mikhtam of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave. (NASB)* David seeks the Lord when destruction is near, **ב חַנּוּנֵי אֱלֹהִים | חַנּוּנֵי כִי** *57:1 Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me, For my soul takes refuge in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge Until destruction passes by. (NASB)* What is the significance of the phrase “shadow of Your wings?” David continues saying, **ג אֶקְרָא** *57:2 I will cry to God Most High, To God who accomplishes all things for me. 57:3 He will send from heaven and save me; He reproaches him who tramples upon me. Selah. God will send forth His lovingkindness and His truth. (NASB)* Why does David state that his soul is among lions? **ה נַפְשִׁי | בְּתוֹךְ לְבָאִם אֲשַׁכְּבָה לְהִטִּים בְּנֵי-אָדָם** *57:4 My soul is among lions; I must lie among those who breathe forth fire, Even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows And their tongue a sharp sword. NASB)* Even though men plot against David, he gives glory to the Lord Almighty. What a great example this is to us to exalt the name of God even in the midst of troubles, **ו רומָה עַל-הַשָּׁמַיִם אֱלֹהִים עַל כָּל-הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדָה** *57:5 Be exalted above the heavens, O God; Let Your glory be above all the earth. (NASB)* David says his enemies, **ז הֵכִינוּ לְפַעְמֵי כַּפֵּי נַפְשִׁי כָרוּ לְפָנַי שִׁיחָה נָפְלוּ בְּתוֹכָהּ סֵלָה** *57:6 They have prepared a net for my steps; My soul is bowed down; They dug a pit before me; They themselves have fallen into the midst of it. Selah. (NASB)* David realizes that the Lord in heaven has the power to save both body and soul from destruction, **ח נִכּוֹן לִבִּי אֱלֹהִים נִכּוֹן לִבִּי אֲשִׁירָה וְאִזְמֶרְהָ: ט עוֹרָה כְּבוֹדֵי עוֹרָה הַגִּבֹּל וְכַנּוֹר אֶעֱרָה שָׁחַר: י אִוְדָה בְּעַמִּים | אֲדַנִּי אִזְמֶרְהָ בְּל-אֲמִים: יא כִּי-גָדַל עַד-שָׁמַיִם חֲסֵדְךָ וְעַד-שָׁחַקִים אֲמַתְּךָ: יב רומָה עַל-שָׁמַיִם אֱלֹהִים עַל כָּל-הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדָה** *57:7 My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises! 57:8 Awake, my glory! Awake, harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn. 57:9 I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to You among the nations. 57:10 For Your lovingkindness is great to the heavens And Your truth to the clouds. 57:11 Be exalted above the heavens, O God; Let Your glory be above all the earth. (NASB)* The grace and truth of God is certainly reason to give glory to the name of the Lord. Halleluia!

| עברית | Hebrew | ארמי | Aramaic | ελληνικός | Greek |
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| | ספר תהלים פרק נז | | ספר טוביה פרק נז | | ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 57 |
| | א לְמַנְצַחַת אֶל-תַּשְׁחַת לְדָוִד מִכְתָּם בְּכַרְחוּ מִפְּנֵי-שְׂאוּל בְּמַעְרָה: ב חַנּוּנֵי אֱלֹהִים חַנּוּנֵי כִי בְּךָ חֲסִיָּה נַפְשִׁי וּבְצֵל-כַּנְפֶיךָ אֶחְסֶה עַד יַעֲבֹר הַוּוֹת: ג אֶקְרָא לְאֱלֹהִים עֲלִיוֹן לְאֵל גֹּמֵר עָלַי: ד יִשְׁלַח מְשֻׁמִּים וְיִוָּשִׁיעַנִי חַרְף שְׂאֵפֵי סֵלָה יִשְׁלַח אֱלֹהִים חֲסֵדוֹ וְאֲמַתּוֹ: | | א לשבחא על עקתא בזמן די אמר דוד לא תחביל אתאמר על יד דוד מכיך ושלים במערקיה מן קדם שאול באוספלידא: ב חוס עלי אלהא חוס עלי ארום במימרך היתרחצת נפשי ובטלל שכינתך אהי רחיץ עד די יעיי בר אתרגושא: | | 57:1 εις τὸ τέλος μὴ διαφθείρης τῷ Δαυὶδ εἰς στηλογραφίαν ἐν τῷ αὐτὸν ἀποδιδράσκειν ἀπὸ προσώπου Σαουλ εἰς τὸ σπῆλαιον ἐλέησόν με ὁ θεὸς ἐλέησόν με ὅτι ἐπὶ σοὶ πέποιθεν ἡ ψυχὴ μου καὶ ἐν τῇ σκιᾷ τῶν πτερυγῶν σου ἐλπῖω ἕως οὗ παρέλθῃ ἡ ἀνομία 57:2 κεκραξομαι πρὸς τὸν θεὸν τὸν ὑψιστον τὸν θεὸν τὸν εὐεργετήσαντά με |

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| <p>ה נַפְשִׁי בְּתוֹךְ לְבָאִם אֲשַׁכְּבָה לְהָ- טִים בְּנֵי-אָדָם שְׁנִיָּהֶם חֲנִית וְחַצְצִים וּלְשׁוֹנָם קָרֵב תְּדַהּ: ו רִוְמָה עַל- הַשָּׁמַיִם אֱלֹהִים עַל כָּל-הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹד־ ךָ: ז רְאֵת הִכִּינוּ לְפַעְמֵי כַּפֵּי נַפְשִׁי כָּרוּ לְפָנַי שִׁיחָה נִפְלוּ בְּתוֹכָהּ סֵלָה: ח נִכּוֹן לְבַי אֱלֹהִים נִכּוֹן לְבַי אֲשִׁירָה וְאֲזַמְרָה: ט עוֹרָה כְּבוֹדֵי עוֹרָה הַגִּבֹּל וְכִנּוֹר אֲעִירָה שָׁחַר: י אוֹדֶךָ בְּעַמִּים אֲדַנִּי אֲזַמְרָךָ בַּל-אֲמִים: יא כִּי-גִדַּל עַד-שָׁמַיִם חֲסָדֶךָ וְעַד-שְׁחַקִּים אֲמַתֶּךָ: יב רִוְמָה עַל-שָׁמַיִם אֱלֹהִים עַל כָּל- הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדֶךָ:</p> | <p>אצלי קדם אלהא עילאה תקיפא ג די פקיד זמין לעכביתא עכבוביתא די גמר בפום אוספלידא \ארום פציתא נפשי ממותא דמייתין ביה חייביא הלא רגלי מלתקלא בחובא מטול דאטייל קדם יהוה בגינתא דעדן למ- חמי בנהור צדיקיא עיזלא אמטולתי: ד ישדר יזמין מלאכיה משמי מרומא ויפרקינני חסד שייפי לעלמין ישדר אלהא טוביה וקושטיה: ה נפשי חיירא חדיא כיד במצע שלהובין אד- מוך ביני גומרין די מלהטין בני נשא דככיהון היך מורניתא וגררין וליש- נהון היך סייפא חריפא: ו אתרורם על מלאכי שמיא אלהא על כל יתבי ארעא איקרך: ז מצדתא אתקר- נו לאיסתורי כייף נפשי כרו קדמי שייחא נפלו במיצעה לעלמין: ח מכוון לבי לבבי לאוריתך יהוה מכוון לבי לבבי לדחלתך אשבח ואזמר: ט איתער יקרי איתער לשבחה על פום ניבלא וכינורא איתער לצלותא דק- ריץ: י אודי קדמך בעמיא בעממיא יהוה אשבחינך באומיא: יא ארום רב עד צית שמיא טובך ועד שחקי קושטך: יב אתרורם יהוה על מלא- כי שמיא אלהא על כל יתבי ארעא איקרך:</p> | <p>57:3 ἐξαπέστειλεν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἔσωσέν με ἔδωκεν εἰς ὄνειδος τοὺς καταπατοῦντάς με διάψαλμα ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν αὐτοῦ 57:4 καὶ ἐρρύσατο τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἐκ μέσου σκύμων ἑκοιμήθην τεταραγμένος υἱοὶ ἀνθρώπων οἱ ὀδόντες αὐτῶν ὄπλον καὶ βέλη καὶ ἡ γλῶσσα αὐτῶν μάχαιρα ὀξεῖα 57:5 ὑψώθητι ἐπὶ τοὺς οὐρανοὺς ὁ θεὸς καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν ἡ δόξα σου 57:6 παγίδα ἠτοίμασαν τοῖς ποσίν μου καὶ κατέκαμψαν τὴν ψυχὴν μου ὠρυξαν πρὸ προσώπου μου βόθρον καὶ ἐνέπεσαν εἰς αὐτόν διάψαλμα 57:7 ἐτοίμη ἡ καρδία μου ὁ θεὸς ἐτοίμη ἡ καρδία μου ἄσομαι καὶ ψαλῶ 57:8 ἐξεγέρθητι ἡ δόξα μου ἐξεγέρθητι ψαλτήριον καὶ κιθάρα 57:9 ἐξεγερθήσομαι ὄρθρου 57:10 ἐξομολογήσομαί σοι ἐν λαοῖς κύριε ψαλῶ σοι ἐν ἔθνεσιν 57:11 ὅτι ἐμεγαλύνθη ἕως τῶν οὐρανῶν τὸ ἔλεός σου καὶ ἕως τῶν νεφελῶν ἡ ἀλήθειά σου ἐπὶ τοὺς οὐρανοὺς ὁ θεὸς καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν ἡ δόξα σου</p> |
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א לְמִנְצֵחַ אֶל-תְּשַׁחֵת לְדָוִד, א This week’s study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 57:1-11*, the psalm opens saying, *א לְמִנְצֵחַ אֶל-תְּשַׁחֵת לְדָוִד, א* For the choir director; set to *Al-tashheth*. A Mikhtam of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave. (NASB) Here we find the words “*Al-tashheth*” (אֶל-תְּשַׁחֵת) transliterated into the English language. The word “*Al*” (אֶל) is an adverb meaning “*don’t, it is forbidden to; not, no,*” and the word “*tashheth*” (תְּשַׁחֵת) is from the root word “*Shakhat*” (שַׁחַת) meaning “*destruction.*” The opening phrase in the Psalm from the MT appears to be related to “*not causing destruction*” upon Saul in the cave. Why do the translators choose to transliterate these words into English? The Septuagint states *μη διαφθείρης* meaning “*do not utterly destroy.*” The entire verse states, 57:1 *εἰς τὸ τέλος μὴ διαφθείρης τῷ Δαυιδ εἰς στήλογραφίαν ἐν τῷ αὐτὸν ἀποδιδράσκειν ἀπὸ προσώπου 57:1 To the director; do not utterly destroy; to David; for an inscription on a monument; in his running away from the face of Saul into the cave. (LXX)* The Aramaic Targum states, *א לשבחה על עקתא בזמן די אמר דוד לא תחביל אתאמר על יד דוד מכיך, א* For praise, concerning the distress at the time when David said, “*Do not harm.*” It was spoken by David, humble and innocent, when he fled from Saul’s presence in the cave. (EMC) The transliterated words which mean to not destroy, is consistent with both the Septuagint and the Aramaic Targum to not do harm to Saul, therefore David was innocent before God and man.

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| <p>Tehillim / Psalms 57 For the choir director; set to Al-tashheth. A Mikhtam of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave. 57:1 Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me, For my soul takes refuge in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge Until destruction passes by. 57:2 I will cry to God Most High, To God who accomplishes all things for me. 57:3 He will send from heaven and save me; He reproaches him who tramples upon me. Selah. God will send forth His lovingkindness and His truth. 57:4 My soul is among lions; I must lie among those who breathe forth fire, Even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows And their tongue a sharp sword. 57:5 Be exalted above the heavens, O God; Let Your glory be above all the earth. 57:6 They have prepared a net for my steps; My soul is bowed down; They dug a pit before me; They themselves have fallen into the midst of it. Selah. 57:7 My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises! 57:8 Awake, my glory! Awake, harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn. 57:9 I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to You among the nations. 57:10 For Your lovingkindness is great to the heavens And Your truth to the clouds. 57:11 Be exalted above the heavens, O God; Let Your glory be above all the earth. (NASB)</p> | <p>Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 57 57:1 For praise, concerning the distress at the time when David said, “Do not harm.” It was spoken by David, humble and innocent, when he fled from Saul’s presence in the cave. 57:2 Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in your word my soul has trusted, and in the shade of your Presence I will be confident until the turmoil passes. 57:3 I will pray before God Most High, the mighty one, who commanded the spider who completed a web for me. 57:4 He will send his angel from heaven above, and he will redeem me; he has put to shame the one who bruises me, forever; God will send his goodness and his truth. 57:5 My soul glows while in the midst of flames; I will sleep among coals that burn, the sons of men whose teeth are like lances and arrows, and whose tongue is like a sharp sword. 57:6 Be exalted over the angels of heaven, O God; your glory is over all those who dwell on earth. 57:7 They have set a net for my footsteps; my soul is bowed down; they dug before me a pit, they have fallen into the middle of it forever. 57:8 My heart is turned to your Torah, O Lord; my heart is turned to fear you; I will praise and sing! 57:9 Wake up, my glory! Wake up to praise by means of the harp and lyre; wake up for the prayer of morning. 57:10 I will give thanks before you among the peoples, O Lord; I will praise you among the nations. 57:11 For your goodness is high to reach the heavens, and your truth, to the clouds. 57:12 Be exalted, O Lord, above the angels of heaven; O God, above all the inhabitants of the earth is your glory. (EMC)</p> | <p>Psalmoi / Psalms 57 For the end. Destroy not: by David, for a memorial, when he fled from the presence of Saul to the cave. 57:1 Have mercy, upon me, O God, have mercy upon me: for my soul has trusted in thee: and in the shadow of thy wings will I hope, until the iniquity have passed away. 57:2 I will cry to God most high; the God who has benefited me. Pause. 57:3 He sent from heaven and saved me; he gave to reproach them that trampled on me: God has sent forth his mercy and his truth; 57:4 and he has delivered my soul from the midst of lions’whelps: I lay down to sleep, though troubled. As for the sons of men, their teeth are arms and missile weapons, and their tongue a sharp sword. 57:5 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; and thy glory above all the earth. 57:6 They have prepared snares for my feet, and have bowed down my soul: they have dug a pit before my face, and fallen into it themselves. Pause. 57:7 My heart, O God, is ready, my heart is ready: I will sing, yea will sing psalms. 57:8 Awake, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I will awake early. 57:9 O Lord, I will give thanks to thee among the nations: I will sing to thee among the Gentiles. 57:10 For thy mercy has been magnified even to the heavens, and thy truth to the clouds. 57:11 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; and thy glory above all the earth. (LXX)</p> |
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David preserved the life of God’s anointed one (Saul). Considering the Hebrew text, the words “*Al-tashheth*” (אַל-תִּשְׁחֶת) draws in a Torah context from *Shemot / Exodus 12* and the story of Pesach (Passover) where the Lord tells Moshe this shall be the beginning of months. On the tenth of the month they are to take a lamb, slay the lamb, take the blood and spread its upon the door posts of their house, and roast the lamb by fire and eat it until morning having their cloths on and sandals on your feet and staff in hand because this is the Lord’s Pesach (Passover) (*Shemot / Exodus 12:1-11*). The blood is to be a sign so that the Lord will pass over the house and the first born will not die (יִגְדַּל הַדָּם לָכֵן לְאֵת עַל הַבְּתִימִים אֲשֶׁר אֲתֵם שָׂם וְרֵאִיתִי)

אֶת-הַדָּם וּפְסַחְתִּי עֲלֵכֶם וְלֹא-יִהְיֶה בְכֶם נֶגֶף לְמִשְׁחֵית בְּהַכְתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם: (12:13). The Lord declares that this shall be an everlasting statute that must be observed (הַזֶּה לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם חֻקַּת עוֹלָם) (12:17). Beginning on the fourteenth day the feast of unleavened bread begins (*Shemot / Exodus 12:18-12:25*). The Lord strikes dead the first born of Egypt and as a result the Egyptians sent the people out in haste out of fear that they would all die if they remained any longer (12:33). The Lord declares that this will be remembered as a feast to the Lord, that the Torah of the Lord will be in your mouth and remember that the Lord brought you out of Egypt by a mighty hand (13:1-16, וְהָיָה לָךְ לְאוֹת עַל-גִּדְךָ וּלְזִכְרוֹן בֵּין עַיְנֶיךָ לְמַעַן תִּהְיֶה תּוֹרַת יְהוָה בְּפִיךָ, (כִּי בִגְד תִּזְקָה הוֹצֵאתָ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרָיִם: פּרשת בא ספר שמות פרק יב פסוק כג וְעָבַר, *Hamashkhit* from Parashat Bo, יְהוָה לְנֶגֶף אֶת-מִצְרָיִם וְרָאָה אֶת-הַדָּם עַל-הַמִּשְׁקוֹף וְעַל שְׁתֵּי הַמְּזוּזוֹת וּפְסַח יְהוָה עַל-הַפֶּתַח וְלֹא יִתֵּן הַמִּשְׁחֵית לְבֹא יְהוָה: 12:23 *For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite you. (NASB)* Based upon the Hebrew syntax, the Lord God Almighty is the one who sees the blood on the lintel (הַמִּשְׁקוֹף) and on the door-posts (הַמְּזוּזוֹת) and having seen the blood would not give the destroyer (הַמִּשְׁחֵית) to enter into the house and strike down the first born. The English translations translate הַמִּשְׁחֵית as “destroyer” or “Slaughterer” depending on the translation. The Aramaic translations on *Shemot / Exodus 12:23* (Targum Onkelos) translates הַמִּשְׁחֵית using different words, מְחַבֵּלָא “לחבלא” but have the same meaning of “destroyer” or “messenger of injury” according to the Aramaic Lexicon, *A dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Bavli, and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic literature, by Marcus Jastrow*. Targum Pseudo Jonathan states מְחַבֵּלָא מְלֹאכָא meaning “angel messenger of injury, or destroyer.” The Targum Neofiti translates like the Targum Onkelos using the word “למחבלנא” but the marginal notes in the Targum Neofiti (*Neofiti Marginalia*) give the translation מְחַבֵּלָא “destroying angel” similar to the Targum Pseudo Jonathan. Therefore, according to the Aramaic translation, the word הַמִּשְׁחֵית is understood by the rabbis to be the “angel / messenger destroyer” or as we more commonly know him as the “angel of death.” Brown Driver and Briggs (BDB) Lexicon states that הַמִּשְׁחֵית means “ruin, destruction” as it is used in *Shemot / Exodus 12:13*, יֵג וְהָיָה הַדָּם לָכֶם לְאוֹת עַל הַבָּתִּים אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם שָׁם, 12:13 *The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. (NASB)* The Septuagint (LXX) does not provide any additional insights to the translation for this text where the key word here in the Septuagint from the book of Exodus is ὀλεθρευοντα (olethreuonta) meaning “annihilating” having the same meaning as “ruin, destruction” according to the BDB Lexicon. Based upon the Torah’s use of the word הַמִּשְׁחֵית and the use of the words “Al-tashheth” (אֶל-תִּשְׁחֶת), David realizes that his role as a child of the most High God is not to be a messenger of destruction. He is not out for blood (Saul’s blood), and behaving in innocence, with righteousness, and truth, David chooses to save Saul’s life because the Lord had chosen him as king over Israel. David does the righteous thing and does not take Saul’s life even though the Lord God Almighty had delivered Saul’s life into his hands.

David continues saying, 57:1 ב חַנּוּנִי אֱלֹהִים | חַנּוּנִי כִי בָךְ תִּסְתָּר נַפְשִׁי וּבְצֵל-כַּנְפֶיךָ אֶחְסֶה עַד יַעֲבֹר הַוּוֹת: *Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me, For my soul takes refuge in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge Until destruction passes by. (NASB)* How does one’s soul take refuge in the Lord God Almighty in heaven and what is the significance of the phrase “shadow of Your wings?” In a similar manner, in *Tehillim / Psalms 11:1*, David opens the Psalm stating, “For the choir director a Psalm of David, in the Lord I take refuge; how can you say to my soul flee as a bird to your mountain” א לְמַצְעַת לְדוֹד בֵּיהוָה (| חַסִּיתִי אִיךָ תִּאמְרוּ לְנַפְשִׁי נוֹדוּ [נוֹדִי] הֲרַכְּם צְפוּר:). In addition to this, *Tehillim / Psalms 34* verses 8 and 22 state that a person is blessed (or happy) who take refuge in Him, and that whoever takes refuge in Him will not be condemned.

Tehillim / Psalms 34:8 ט טַעֲמוּ וּרְאוּ כִּי-טוֹב יְהוָה אֲשֶׁרִי הִגָּבֵר יִחְסֶה-בוֹ: *O taste and see that the Lord is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! David's hope is in the refuge that God provides in His salvation and deliverance. (NASB)*

Tehillim / Psalms 34:22 כג פוֹדֵה יְהוָה נַפְשׁ עֲבָדָיו וְלֹא יֵאָשְׁמוּ כָּל-הַחֹסִים בוֹ: *The Lord redeems the soul of His servants, And none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned. (NASB)*

The phrase to take refuge in God is a rather common biblical image or theme, but just what does it mean? In the *Tehillim / Psalms 11* study we discussed how the Lord provides a refuge through His abiding presence in our lives making a reference to Parashat Ki Tisa (*Shemot / Exodus 30:11-34:35*) the Lord made a promise in *Shemot / Exodus 33:14* saying, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest” (יָד וַיֹּאמֶר פָּנִי יִלְכוּ וְהִנַּחֲתִי לָךְ).

The Scriptures provide us with rich imagery that describes those who dwell under the “shadow” of God. The imagery tells us about the character of God provides a connection between ancient Israel, the people, and the events of the Apostolic Writings. What does it mean to live under the Shadow? According to David, the best place to be in is God’s shadow. The Torah tells us that shortly after the exodus, the Lord God called Moses up the mountain to give him the “Ten Words” (*Shemot / Exodus 20*). Later on in the text, the Lord calls Moshe along with 72 elders to go up the mountain. According to these Scriptures, they “beheld God” and shared a covenant-meal in His presence (*Shemot / Exodus 24*). The Lord reveals to Moshe that He wants him to build a sanctuary for him in *Shemot / Exodus 25:8-9*, כָּל־ט כָּל־ט וְעָשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשִׁכְנָתִי בְּתוֹכָם: 25:8 אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְרַאֶה אוֹתְךָ אֵת תְּבִנֹת הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְאֵת תְּבִנֹת כָּל-כְּלֵיו וְכֵן תַּעֲשׂוּ: 25:9 אֲנִי מְרַאֶה אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי עוֹשֶׂה לְעֵינֶיךָ וְכֵן תַּעֲשׂוּ: *Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them. 25:9 According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it. (NASB)* In this section of the Scriptures we are told of a man who was chosen to construct the Tabernacle, the Lord says, ב רֹאֵה קִרְאתִי בְשֵׁם בְּצַלְאֵל בֶּן-אוּרִי בֶן-חֹר לְמִטֵּה יְהוּדָה: ג וְאִמְלֵא אוֹתוֹ רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים בְּחָכְמָה וּבְתַבּוּנָה וּבְדַעַת וּבְכָל-מְלָאכָה: ד וְהָיָה בְּעֵינָי וְהִנַּחֲתִי אֶת רוּחִי בְּכָל־אִישׁ מֵעַמְּךָ וְיִבְרָא אֶת־בְּרָאִתּוֹ וְעָשָׂה כְּכָל־אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי אֹמֵר אֵלָיו: ה וְיִבְרָא אֶת־בְּרָאִתּוֹ וְעָשָׂה כְּכָל־אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי אֹמֵר אֵלָיו: *See, I have called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. 31:3 I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship, 31:4 to make artistic designs for work in gold, in silver, and in bronze, 31:5 and in the cutting of stones for settings, and in the carving of wood, that he may work in all kinds of craftsmanship. (NASB)* Based upon this reading, three things stand out that are related to dwelling in the shadow of God.

Summary Points

1. Bezalel was an accomplished artisan, he was a metal worker, jeweler, gem-cutter, and wood worker. *Shemot / Exodus 35* adds that he was an engraver, designer, embroiderer and weaver, and performed every inventive work (35:33-35). He was the first in the history of mankind to build a sanctuary for the Lord. Bezalel’s name (בְּצַלְאֵל) is the composition of a preposition (בְּ), the word צֶלֶם meaning “shadow,” and the word אֱלֹהִים meaning “God.” Thus, his name means “in the shadow of God.” His assistant was a man named Oholiab (*Shemot / Exodus 31:6*). Oholiab’s name (אֹהֲלִיאֵב) is a composition of two words, the word in the construct form אֹהֶל meaning “the tent of,” and the word אָב meaning “Father.” Therefore, his name means “the Father’s tent.”

2. The Scriptures say that Bezalel's "wisdom" (חָכְמָה) came to him by the Spirit of God. The NJPS translation states 31:3 "I have endowed him with a divine spirit of skill, ability, and knowledge in every kind of craft." He was filled by the power of God by his Ruach (the Spirit of God, Ruach Elohim). Bezalel ("in the shadow of God") his name is descriptive of the way in which he was overshadowed by the power of God. The overshadowing provided him with the means to do the work the Lord had intended by being in God's shadow, enshrouded by His divine Spirit. What is the power of the Ruach Hakodesh (Holy Spirit) today in light of these verses? (e.g. the tabernacle, kingdom of God, overcoming sin, serving others, etc?)
3. Bezalel was also from the tribe of Judah. It is interesting to note that his task was to build God's earthly dwelling place. King David, whose purpose was to build our Father in Heaven a second earthly dwelling place, whose task was passed on to his son Solomon. According to the Scriptures, He was given "the plan" for God's house "by the Spirit with him" and then passed the blueprints on to his son Solomon (1 Chronicles 28:12 and 2 Samuel 7:12-16). Later on, according to the Apostolic Writings, we read of a Judean King, Yeshua who enabled the indwelling of God's Spirit in houses of flesh and bone, a house that is not made by human hands.

In addition to this, studying the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 40-66), we are given a picture of God's servants, (i) Israel and (ii) his anointed one (Mashiach). In Isaiah 49 we read the following, 49:1 Listen to Me, O islands, And pay attention, you peoples from afar. The Lord called Me from the womb; From the body of My mother He named Me. 49:2 He has made My mouth like a sharp sword, In the shadow of His hand He has concealed Me; And He has also made Me a select arrow, He has hidden Me in His quiver. (NASB) According to these Scriptures, being under the shadow of God's hand implies a form of protecting, nurturing, and training. For example, a father uses his hand to guide the hand of his inexperienced son, and in a similar manner, the Lord God trains his children. "The LORD is the shade on your right hand" (Tehillim / Psalms 121:5). "You have taken hold of my right hand" (Tehillim / Psalms 73:23). "Your right hand upholds me" (Tehillim / Psalms 18:35). In Isaiah 49, the Lord kept his anointed one under His hand until he steps forward "to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel" (Isaiah 49:5). He will then be sent out as a flaming arrow as "a light to the Gentiles" (Isaiah 49:6) though he will be despised and abhorred by his own people (Isaiah 49:7), he will succeed in the job he was sent to do. Note also how Isaiah writes in Isaiah 51:16 and 59:21:

Isaiah 51:16

51:16 'I have put My words in your mouth and have covered you with the shadow of My hand, to establish the heavens, to found the earth, and to say to Zion, 'You are My people.' (NASB)

Isaiah 59:21

59:21 'As for Me, this is My covenant with them,' says the Lord: 'My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring's offspring,' says the Lord, 'from now and forever.' (NASB)

These Scriptures denote being under the shadow of the hand of the Lord. David also wrote in his psalms using this metaphor of being in the shadow of God according to Tehillim 17:8, 57:1, 63:7, and 91:1-4:

Tehillim / Psalms 17:8

17:8 Keep me as the apple of the eye; Hide me in the shadow of Your wings (NASB)

Tehillim / Psalms 57:1

57:1 Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me, For my soul takes refuge in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge Until destruction passes by. (NASB)

Tehillim / Psalms 63:7

63:7 For You have been my help, And in the shadow of Your wings I sing for joy. (NASB)

Tehillim / Psalms 91:1-4

91:1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. 91:2 I will say to the Lord, 'My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!' 91:3 For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper And from the deadly pestilence. 91:4 He will cover you with His pinions, And under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark. (NASB)

The hand of the Lord casts a shadow over His people. The idea of living under the “shadow” of God is a prominent concept throughout Israel’s history. This concept puts forth the idea that the Lord extended His Presence over those who trusted him and expressed willingness to dwell under His protection. The shadow metaphor comes by descriptions of the Hand of God, the Wings of God, and the Ruach (*Wind or Spirit*) of God which all convey his loving interest in those who fear him. David says, בַּחֲנֹנֵי אֱלֹהִים | חֲנֹנֵי כִי בָדָה, *57:1 Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me, For my soul takes refuge in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge Until destruction passes by. (NASB)* The righteous ones (you and I) are to place our soul in God’s hands by trusting and believing in His Word, in His promises, and in His Messiah Yeshua. The significance of the phrase of the “shadow of Your wings,” is the concept of trusting, remaining in our faith, and serving Him according to truth and righteousness by obedience to His commands according to the Torah.

David continues saying, גִּאֲקִרָא לֵאלֹהִים עֲלִיּוֹן לְאֵל גִּמְרַעֲלִי: ד יִשְׁלַח מִשְׁמַיִם | וְיִוְשִׁיעֵנִי חַרְרֵי שֹׂאֲפֵי סֶלָה, *57:2 I will cry to God Most High, To God who accomplishes all things for me. 57:3 He will send from heaven and save me; He reproaches him who tramples upon me. Selah. God will send forth His lovingkindness and His truth. (NASB)* The Masoretic Text literally says “I will call to God Most High, to God who finish/complete/conclude (גִּמְרַע) unto me.” The NASB translates “To God who accomplishes all things for me.” The Lord finishing, completing, or concluding all things, this is only possible if He is ultimately in control and is capable of accomplishing what is necessary to save or deliver. If we place ourselves under His shadow, we give the Lord the opportunity to work in a miraculous way in our lives. *Tehillim / Psalms 57:3* states that “He will send from heaven,” either the Lord will send His angels, as in *Daniel 3:28*, or by His power, the Lord will help in some extraordinary way in either changing the heart of man, or to overcome the enemy that surrounds us. Note that the enemy may come in many forms, take for example “sin,” the Lord gives us the power to overcome sin in our lives. The reproach (שֹׂאֲפֵי) which Saul is planning on bringing upon David, the Lord can turn that around for victory, the Lord will send forth His lovingkindness and His truth for the glory of His name.

How are lovingkindness and truth sent forth? What does that mean? By now we certainly recognize that the NASB translates khesed by the English word “lovingkindness.” This Hebrew word (khesed) has a great deal more in its full meaning than we can capture in one English word. For example, we can learn something about the translators of the KJV bible the KJV translates khesed as “mercy” 155 times, as “kindness” 43 times, as “lovingkindness” 30 times, and as “goodness” 14 times. Gordon R. Clark has a more comprehensive study on the word khesed in his book titled “הַסֵּד - A Study of a Lexical Field.” The word khesed is often the object of the sentence, not the subject; therefore the verb that precedes the word khesed

is an important indicator as to what khesed is doing. While not every occurrence of khesed is found in a verb-object relationship, but of those that are, the vast majority follow the verb asah (עשה), translated in the KJV as “sheweth/showed,” refers to something that is done, “to do,” etc. The term asah (עשה) is a common Hebrew verb meaning “to do, to make, to perform;” thus when translating it with khesed as the object, it is more correct to say that one “does” khesed. What is important to understand here is the predominance of God as the one who “does khesed.” There are 245 such references found in the MT, two-thirds of them either describe God as one who “does khesed” or are praises to God because he “does khesed.” Of the remaining third, about half of those also mention khesed in connection with the Lord God. Therefore, khesed is clearly associated with the Lord and may even be used to define having an experience with God similar to what we find here in the Psalm, the Lord sends forth his khesed and truth. Note how this is also connected to being under the shadow of His presence. In addition to this, khesed may also be performed by man, which suggests that khesed is a characteristic that is common between both the nature of man and his relationship with God.

Two examples on the word khesed may be found in the Torah, concerning Abraham and Lot. In the narrative on the story of Lot we find a reference to khesed in the words of Lot to the angels who had come to warn him of the impending destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. After the angels told Lot to leave and travel some distance, Lot’s response was to ask if he could travel to a nearby town in *Bereshit / Genesis 19:19-20* he said, **יט הִנֵּה-נָא מֵצָא עֲבָדְךָ חֹן בְּעֵינֶיךָ וַתַּגְדֵּל חַסְדְּךָ אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ עִמָּדִי לְהַחֲיוֹת אֶת-נַפְשִׁי וְאָנֹכִי לֹא אוֹכַל לְהַמְלִיט הַהֲרָה פֶּן-תִּדְבַקְנִי הָרָעָה וּמָתִי: כ הִנֵּה-נָא הָעִיר הַזֹּאת קְרֹבָה לְנוֹס שָׁמָּה וְהוּא מְצָעָר אִמְלָטָה נָא: 19:19 ‘Now behold, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have magnified your lovingkindness, which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, for the disaster will overtake me and I will die; 19:20 now behold, this town is near enough to flee to, and it is small. Please, let me escape there (is it not small?) that my life may be saved.’” (NASB) As the Scripture shows, Lot began his request by recognizing that God, or God’s messenger in this case, had already performed khesed by warning Lot of the impending destruction. Therefore Lot was asking for another act of khesed, as implied by virtue of his mentioning that God had already performed khesed on his behalf (e.g. “Now behold, your servant has found favor in your site...”). Similarly, Abraham was acquainted with khesed, both as a giver and a receiver. In *Bereshit / Genesis 20*, Abraham asked Sarah to show him khesed by saying that she was his sister when they met potentially life-threatening individuals in *Bereshit / Genesis 20:13* saying, **ג וַיְהִי כִּאֲשֶׁר הִתְעוּ אֹתִי אֱלֹהִים מִבֵּית אָבִי וְאָמַר לָהּ זֶה חַסְדְּךָ אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשִׂי עִמָּדִי אֵל כָּל-20:13 and it came about, when God caused me to wander from my father’s house, that I said to her, ‘This is the kindness which you will show to me: everywhere we go, say of me, ‘He is my brother.’” (NASB) Note how Abraham says **זֶה חַסְדְּךָ אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשִׂי עִמָּדִי** “this is your khesed that you are to do/performance unto me.” Here we find the “performance of khesed” in a word or deed. In *Bereshit / Genesis 21*, Abimelech, one of Abraham’s neighbors and rivals, wishing to avoid future confrontations, entered into a covenant relationship with Abraham saying in *Bereshit / Genesis 21:23*, **כג וַעֲתָה הַשְּׁבַעָה לִּי 21:23 בְּאֱלֹהִים הַנֵּה אִם-תִּשְׁקַר לִי וּלְנִינִי וּלְנִכְדֵי בְּחֶסֶד אֲשֶׁר-עָשִׂיתִי עִמָּךָ תַּעֲשֶׂה עִמָּדִי וְעַם-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-גֵּרְתָה בָּהּ: now therefore, swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me or with my offspring or with my posterity, but according to the kindness that I have shown to you, you shall show to me and to the land in which you have sojourned.’” (NASB) The idea that God sends forth his khesed and truth, means that He will perform something on our behalf for deliverance from a situation, disease, sickness, an enemy, and all of these things will occur for those who remain under His shadow by faith.******

ה נַפְשִׁי | בְּתוֹךְ לְבָאִם אֲשֶׁכְּבָה לְהָטִים בְּנֵי-אָדָם שֹׁנֵיָהֶם חֲנִית וְחֲצִים וּלְשׁוֹנָם חֶרֶב, הַדָּה: 57:4 My soul is among lions; I must lie among those who breathe forth fire, Even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows And their tongue a sharp sword. NASB He lives among men who bite, who lie, and he describes this as though one breathed forth fire. The teeth of these men are spears and arrows, and the tongue like a sharp sword, may be a reference to Doeg and His performing lashon hara against David and the priests in the Tabernacle of God. Even though men plot against David in this way, giving

their words to the service of evil, death, and destruction, he gives glory to the Lord God Almighty. He says, רומָה על-השָׁמַיִם אֱלֹהִים על כָּל-הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדָךְ: 57:5 *Be exalted above the heavens, O God; Let Your glory be above all the earth.* (NASB) Note the MT the English verse is translated from. David uses the word רומָה meaning “discharge cup.” The Aramaic Targum agrees with the MT saying, ו אתרורם על מלאכי 57:6 *Be exalted over the angels of heaven, O God; your glory is over all those who dwell on earth.* (EMC) The word רומָה occurs in *Tehillim / Psalms 21:14, 57:6, 57:12, and 108:6* and in each case, its usage in the Psalms is exalting the Lord God in heaven. David uses this word to say that the Lord is exalted above the heavens. This is a place that is higher than the heavens, the highest degree possible to glorify His power and goodness, justice and faithfulness, etc. The use of the word for the discharge cup may be similar to raising or lifting a cup to honor Him.

David says his enemies, רָשָׁת | הִכִּינוּ לְפַעְמֵי כָפָף נַפְשִׁי כָרוּ לְפָנַי שִׁיחָה נָפְלוּ בְתוֹכָהּ סְלָה: 57:6 *They have prepared a net for my steps; My soul is bowed down; They dug a pit before me; They themselves have fallen into the midst of it. Selah.* (NASB) The Aramaic Targum states, ז מצדתא אתקיננו לאיסתורי כיף נפשי ז 57:6 *They have set a net for my footsteps; my soul is bowed down; they dug before me a pit, they have fallen into the middle of it forever.* (EMC) The Septuagint states, 57:6 παρίδα ἡτοίμασαν τοῖς ποσί μου καὶ κατέκαμψαν τὴν ψυχὴν μου ὄρυσξαν πρὸ προσώπου μου βόθρον καὶ ἐνέπεσαν εἰς αὐτόν διάψαλμα 57:6 *They have prepared snares for my feet, and have bowed down my soul: they have dug a pit before my face, and fallen into it themselves. Pause.* (LXX) The rabbis say that the wicked fall into the pit forever (לעלמין). David had written previously about how the enemy digs a pit to trap the righteous (*Tehillim / Psalms 7, 9, and 35*). In *Tehillim / Psalms 7*, David indicated that if we sin and do not repent the very nature of the one who refuses to repent is rooted in lies, untruths, and falsehood. Such a person cannot stand before a Holy God. He continues saying that such people have: טז בור כָּרָה וַיִּחְפְּרֶהוּ וַיִּפֹּל בְּשַׁחַת יַפְעֹל: 7:15 *He has dug a pit and hollowed it out, And has fallen into the hole which he made.* 7:16 *His mischief will return upon his own head, And his violence will descend upon his own pate.* (NASB) The person who is unrepentant, he has trapped himself, he has dug a pit and has fallen himself into the hole that he has made. Unrighteousness, pride, sin, iniquity, transgressions, lies, untruths, falsehoods, all of these one day will return to the person who “works or labors” (עָמַל) in sin. His violence, his plot and plan for the harm of the innocent, will return back upon him by the instruments which he uses. David also describes the nations in *Tehillim / Psalms 9* saying, יז נודע | יהוה משפט עשה בפעל כפיו נוקש, רָשָׁע הִגִּיוֹן סְלָה: יח ישובו רשעים לשאולה כל-גוים שכחי אלהים: יט כי לא לנצח ישכח אביון תקנת ענוים [עננים] תאבד לעד: כ קומה יהוה אל-יעז אנוש ישפטו גוים על-פניה: כא שיתה יהוה | מורה להם ידעו גוים 9:15 *The nations have sunk down in the pit which they have made; In the net which they hid, their own foot has been caught.* 9:16 *The Lord has made Himself known; He has executed judgment. In the work of his own hands the wicked is snared. Higgsion Selah.* 9:17 *The wicked will return to Sheol, Even all the nations who forget God.* 9:18 *For the needy will not always be forgotten, Nor the hope of the afflicted perish forever.* 9:19 *Arise, O Lord, do not let man prevail; Let the nations be judged before You.* 9:20 *Put them in fear, O Lord; Let the nations know that they are but men. Selah.* (NASB) It is interesting here that in both the Hebrew and Aramaic translations we read the עממא דאשליה כולהון דאיתנשו דחלתא דיהוה אלהא: 9:18 *The wicked will return to Sheol, all the Gentiles who neglected the fear of the Lord.* (EMC) Both the Hebrew and Aramaic text indicate that the wicked return to the grave. Does this suggest that the wicked, all those who do not fear the Lord, the Gentiles, their state of being is in the grave? They come and go from the grave (שָׂאוֹל), their habitation is in the grave? Based on the description given, sin, unrighteousness, and wickedness are all synonymous to death. The Lord has executed judgment upon the nations and the result is that they have fallen into the pit they have made. This means the plans that our enemies have made for us, to destroy us, will return back upon them and this is the righteous judgment of God.

David realizes that the Lord in heaven has the power to save both body and soul from destruction saying

ה נכון לבי אלהים נכון לבי אשירה ואומרה: ט עורה כבודי עורה הנגל וכנור אעירה שחר: י
 אודה בעמים | אדני אומרה בל-אמים: יא כִּי-גָדַל עַד-שָׁמַיִם חֲסֵדָה וְעַד-שָׁחֲקִים אֲמַתָּה: יב רומה על-שמים אלהים
 : 57:7 *My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing, yes, I will sing
 praises! 57:8 Awake, my glory! Awake, harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn. 57:9 I will give thanks to You,
 O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to You among the nations. 57:10 For Your lovingkindness
 is great to the heavens And Your truth to the clouds. 57:11 Be exalted above the heavens, O God; Let Your
 glory be above all the earth. (NASB)* David says that his heart is “true” or “correct” (נכון). What does it
 mean to have a correct or true heart? Having a true heart seems to be a reference to one’s inward life. David
 may be describing how his heart is fixed upon the Lord, his whole heart seeks the Lord. So he gives his heart
 to be joyful in song with the harp and lyre, and gives thanks to the Lord for his grace (חסד), he is exulted
 above the heavens. The Aramaic Targum and the Septuagint translate these verses in the following way.

Aramaic Targum

Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 57:8-12

*57:8 My heart is turned to your Torah, O Lord; my heart is turned to fear you; I will praise
 and sing! 57:9 Wake up, my glory! Wake up to praise by means of the harp and lyre; wake up
 for the prayer of morning. 57:10 I will give thanks before you among the peoples, O Lord;
 I will praise you among the nations. 57:11 For your goodness is high to reach the heavens,
 and your truth, to the clouds. 57:12 Be exalted, O Lord, above the angels of heaven; O God,
 above all the inhabitants of the earth is your glory. (EMC)*

ה מכוון לבי לבבי לאוריתך יהוה מכוון לבי לבבי לדחלתך אשבה ואזמר: ט איתער יקרי איתער
 לשבחה על פום ניבלא וכינורא איתער לצלותא דקרייך: י אודי קדמך בעמיה בעמיה יהוה אשב-
 חניך באומיה: יא ארום רב עד צית שמיא טובך ועד שחקי קושטך: יב אתרורם יהוה על מלאכי
 שמיא אלהא על כל יתבי ארעא איקרך:

Septuagint

Psalmoi / Psalms 57:7-11

*7:7 My heart, O God, is ready, my heart is ready: I will sing, yea will sing psalms. 57:8
 Awake, my glory; awake, psalter and harp: I will awake early. 57:9 O Lord, I will give
 thanks to thee among the nations: I will sing to thee among the Gentiles. 57:10 For thy mercy
 has been magnified even to the heavens, and thy truth to the clouds. 57:11 Be thou exalted,
 O God, above the heavens; and thy glory above all the earth. (LXX)*

57:7 ετοίμη ἡ καρδία μου ὁ θεός ετοίμη ἡ καρδία μου ἄσομαι καὶ ψαλῶ 57:8 ἐξεγέρθητι ἡ
 δόξα μου ἐξεγέρθητι ψαλτήριον καὶ κιθάρα ἐξεγεροθήσομαι ὄρθρου 57:9 ἐξομολογήσομαί
 σοι ἐν λαοῖς κύριε ψαλῶ σοι ἐν ἔθνεσιν 57:10 ὅτι ἐμεγαλύνθη ἕως τῶν οὐρανῶν τὸ ἔλεός
 σου καὶ ἕως τῶν νεφελῶν ἡ ἀλήθειά σου 57:11 ὑψώθητι ἐπὶ τοὺς οὐρανοὺς ὁ θεός καὶ ἐπὶ
 πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν ἡ δόξα σου

Notice how the rabbis say that David’s heart is turned to God’s Torah. A true heart looks to God’s ways
 and has the intent of applying His ways to one’s life. (Note what the Apostle John writes in 1 John 2 and 5
 with regard to obeying the command of God.) He concludes saying the Lord is exalted above the angels of
 heaven and above the inhabitants of the earth. The Septuagint states that his heart is ready and for this he
 sings unto the Lord in the midst of the nations. Does your heart sing for joy like David’s heart because of
 the way in which the Lord has worked in your life? The grace and truth of God is certainly reason to give

glory to the name of the Lord. Let's ask the Lord to help us to have true hearts, to seek His ways, and to have the power of the resurrection in our lives to overcome sin. Let's Pray!

Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 57* has 4 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 1, 2, 3, and 4. Let's begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 56, Part 1, 2, 3, and 4*.

Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 57, Part 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*For the leader; Al-tashheth. A Psalm of David; Michtam; when he fled from Saul, in the cave. Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me, for my soul takes refuge in You (Tehillim / Psalms 57:1-2).*”
- The **פתיחתא** (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Why did David say twice, Be merciful unto me?*”
- The **משל** (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the **פתיחתא** (Petihta), the rabbis go on to discuss the idea of being merciful.
- The **נמשל** (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the **משל** (mashal), the rabbis expand upon being merciful and use examples from Saul and whether David sinned he would find mercy in God's hands.
- The Concluding phrase says “*In You will my soul take refuge among the kingdoms so that they will not consume me utterly. Until these calamities be past, when the calamities from the kingdoms are past, You will return me to Your sanctuary where I will pray and give thanks.*”

Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*I will cry unto God Most High; unto God that approves the cause I have in hand (Tehillim / Psalms 57:3).*”
- The **פתיחתא** (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Rabbi Simon taught in the name of Rabbi Joshua son of Levi, Concerning three things, tithes, greeting with God's name, and reading the Scroll of Esther, the Holy One blessed be He, approved the decree of a court on earth*”
- The **משל** (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the **פתיחתא** (Petihta), the rabbis go on to discuss crying out to God.
- The **נמשל** (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the **משל** (mashal), the rabbis expand by looking at three things, tithes, greeting with God's name, and reading the scroll of Esther, and what happened when Israel neglected these things.
- The Concluding phrase says “*And should you say that Boaz spoke thus unto his own accord, but that in heaven they did not approve of what he said, then mark what the angel said to Gideon, The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor (Judges 6:12).*”

Part 3

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*Rabbi Tahalifa of Ceasarea taught, At the time that Saul violated the decree of the Holy One blessed be He, concerning Amalek, Samuel came and rebuked him, saying You have rejected the word of the Lord (1 Samuel 15:26);*”
- The **פתיחתא** (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*and as Samuel turned to go*”

away, he rent Saul's robe, as is said And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his robe, and it rent.”

- The משל (mashal) “the parable,” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis go on to discuss how the Lord rend the kingdom from Saul.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “expansion on the parable” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the dibur hamathil with a dialogue between Saul and Samuel.
- The Concluding phrase says “You will be king in this world, and you will rule in the world to come, for it is said, And My servant David will be king (Ezekiel 37:24).”

Part 4

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “Awake, my glory (Tehillim / Psalms 57:9).”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “David said, Awake, my glory for the sake of my Master's glory, my glory being nothing before my Makers glory.”
- The משל (mashal) “the parable,” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis go on to discuss these opening words of being away.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “expansion on the parable” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the opening words to make a comparison to waking early and sleeping in late, to kings and to David.
- The Concluding phrase says “Of this, it is written, when the instrument played (2 Kings 3:15), note that it is not written when minstrel played, but When the instrument played meaning that the harp played of itself.”

Midrash Tehillim 57, Part 1 opens with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “For the leader; Al-tashheth. A Psalm of David; Michtam; when he fled from Saul, in the cave. Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me, for my soul takes refuge in You (Tehillim / Psalms 57:1-2).” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “Why did David say twice, Be merciful unto me?” The entire midrash states the following:

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| <p>א נמיס זנ קרפ פילהת שרדמ ינפמ וחרבב מתכמ דודל תחשת לא הצנמל א רב יכ יננח [מיהלא] (ה') יננח הרעמב לואש אלש יננח, יננח סימעפ יתש המל. ישפנ היסח ילע סה וניא ודיב לופא מאש, לואש דיב לופא יתוא התפי אלש, ידיב לואש לופי אלש יננח [מיהלא] (ה') יננח יוה, והגרהאו ערה רצי ותווה. תווה רובעי דע הסחא קיפנכ לצבו. יננח רבדב לשכא אלש. יננח רחא רבד. לואש לש היסח רב, אטחא מולשו סה מאש יננח. [הריבע תווה רובעי דע. הבושתב רוזחאש, ישפנ אלש. יננח רחא רבד. יתונוע לע רפכמ התאש רב. תולגב יננח, תיבה ברחזי תונועה ומרגי תוא תולכמ ויהי אלש, תויכלמב, ישפנ היסח ינבישתו, תויכלמ לש נתווה, תווה רובעי דע. ונ הדואו ללפתא משו, קשדקמ תיבל</p> | <p>Midrash Tehillim 57, Part 1 1. For the leader; Al-tashheth. A Psalm of David; Michtam; when he fled from Saul, in the cave. Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me, for my soul takes refuge in You (Tehillim / Psalms 57:1-2). Why did David say twice, Be merciful unto me? Be merciful unto me that I fall not into the hand of Saul, for if I fall into his hand he will not spare me; and Be merciful unto me that Saul fall not into my hand, so that the Inclination to evil entice me not and I kill Saul. Hence, David said twice, Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me, Yea, in the shadow of Your wings will I take refuge, until these calamities be past, these calamities from Saul. Another comment, Be merciful unto me, so that, if God forbid, I do sin, In You will my soul take refuge, returning in penitence until these calamities be past, that is, until You have brought me to expiate my iniquities. Another comment, Be merciful unto me, that is, unto Israel, so that iniquities will not cause the Temple to be destroyed. Be merciful unto me in exile. In You will my soul take refuge among the kingdoms so that they will not consume me utterly. Until these calamities be past, when the calamities from the kingdoms are past, You will return me to Your sanctuary where I will pray and give thanks.</p> |
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The midrash opens saying, “*For the leader; Al-tashheth. A Psalm of David; Michtam; when he fled from Saul, in the cave. Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me, for my soul takes refuge in You (Tehillim / Psalms 57:1-2).*” The rabbis shorten verse two of the Psalm as compared to the MT, א לְמִנְצִיחַ אֶל-תְּשֻׁחַת בַּמְעָרָה: ב הַנִּנְיָ אֱלֹהִים | הַנִּנְיָ כִּי בָּךְ חָסָיָה נַפְשִׁי וּבְצֵל-כַּנְּפֶיךָ אֶחְסֶה עַד יַעֲבֹר הַוּוֹת: (NASB) *For the choir director; set to Al-tashheth. A Mikhtam of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave. (NASB) 57:1 Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me, For my soul takes refuge in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge Until destruction passes by. (NASB)* The midrash asks the question of why David repeated himself asking the Lord to be merciful (הַנִּנְיָ) to him? The rabbis say that he asked twice so that both David and Saul would be spared.

Be merciful unto me that I fall not into the hand of Saul, for if I fall into his hand he will not spare me; and Be merciful unto me that Saul fall not into my hand, so that the Inclination to evil entice me not and I kill Saul. Hence, David said twice, Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me, Yea, in the shadow of Your wings will I take refuge, until these calamities be past, these calamities from Saul. (Midrash Tehillim 57, Part 1)

David asks the Lord twice to be merciful and the manner in which his request is made is such that neither one of them fall into each others hands. If David were to fall into Saul’s hands, Saul would show no mercy. If Saul were to fall into David’s hands, David is worried that his evil inclination would entice him to kill Saul. Thinking on the idea that David’s inclination might cause him to kill Saul, the rabbis in *Midrash Rabbah Bereshit, Parashat 89, Part 1* (מדרש רבה בראשית פרשה פט סימן א) speak of an Evil Tempter who exists and is able to cause trouble for mankind.

Midrash Rabbah Bereshit, Parashat 89, Part 1

And it came to pass at the end of the two full years, etc (Bereshit / Genesis 41:1). It is written, He sets an end to darkness, etc (Job 28:3), a definite period was set for the world to spend in darkness. What is the proof? He sets an end to darkness... the stones of thick darkness and the shadow of death. For as long as the Evil Tempter exists in the world, thick darkness and the shadow of death are in the world; when the Evil Tempter will be uprooted from the world, thick darkness and the shadow of death will pass away from the world. Another interpretation of, He sets an end to darkness, a definite number of years was fixed for Joseph to spend in prison. When the appointed time came, Pharaoh dreamed a dream, thus, And it came to pass at the end of two full years, etc.

מדרש רבה בראשית פרשה פט סימן א

א ויהי מקץ שנתים ימים, (איוב כה) קץ שם לחשך, זמן נתן לעולם כמה שנים יעשה באפילה, ומאי טעם קץ שם לחושך שכל זמן שיצר הרע בעולם אופל וצלמות בעולם, דכתיב (שם איוב כ"ח) אבן אופל וצלמות, נעקר יצר הרע מן העולם אין אופל וצלמות בעולם, דבר אחר קץ שם לחשך, זמן נתן ליוסף כמה שנים יעשה באפילה בבית האסורים, כיון שהגיע הקץ חלם פרעה חלום.

Midrash Rabbah Bereshit, Parashat 89, Part 1 states that the Lord is the one who sets the appointed times for all things. The example they give is from Joseph’s life and the written text that says “*And it came to pass at the end of two full years*” (*Bereshit / Genesis 41:1*) commenting how the Lord sets an end to darkness and He is the one who establishes the period of time for certain events (e.g. the world to spend in darkness). A parallel is then drawn to “darkness” and the “Evil Tempter” (יצר הרע). Notice how the Evil Tempter is described as the Tetzzer Hara (יצר הרע), the evil inclination according to the Midrash. The context of the Evil Tempter is to the book of Job indicated by the reference to Job (שם איוב כ"ח) in the midrash, and the

way in which the midrash is written saying, שכל זמן שיצר הרע בעולם “as long as the Evil Tempter exists in the world,” and also the phrase which says, נעקר יצר הרע מן העולם “to emasculate or castrate, the Evil Tempter from the world,” suggests that the Yetzer Hara (Evil Tempter) is taking on a personification, as we read in the book of Job, Satan an adversary of mankind and of God. The rabbis continue saying that this Evil Tempter exists in the world, thick darkness and the shadow of death are in the world, and when the Evil tempter is removed, both the darkness and the shadow of death will also be removed. The Lord is the one who establishes and sets the times for this to occur. These things are paralleled to Pharaoh’s dream and the appointed time for the things he dreamed that were about to transpire (come to pass). The way the midrash is written, we get the imagery that the Evil Tempter acts independently to accuse but must get the permission of God to move against the righteous. Here, the Yetzer Hara (“Evil Tempter” יצר הרע) in David’s case is different from Satan even though the midrash provides a sort of personality in its description of the evil inclination. The Yetzer Hara is his own personal desires, as James said in his epistle, *James 1:14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. (NASB)*

The midrash continues saying the following:

Another comment, Be merciful unto me, so that, if God forbid, I do sin, In You will my soul take refuge, returning in penitence until these calamities be past, that is, until You have brought me to expiate my iniquities. Another comment, Be merciful unto me, that is, unto Israel, so that iniquities will not cause the Temple to be destroyed. Be merciful unto me in exile. (Midrash Tehillim 57, Part 1)

Notice how the rabbis write about David providing us David’s thoughts that “if I do sin, in You will my soul take refuge” illustrating the merciful God we serve. The sentence continues saying “until You have brought me to expiate my iniquities.” The concept that is being put forward in the midrash is that David needed to pay for his sins before God. What does it mean that one must “expiate” their iniquities here in the midrash? It is interesting that the Scriptures describe three methods of atonement, (i) the sin sacrifice, (ii) repentance, and (iii) charity. In addition to this, the sin sacrifice (Chatat Korban) did not atone for all types of sin, but rather only for man’s unintentional sins. The sin sacrifice was not sufficient to atone for transgressions committed intentionally. According to the Torah, the brazen sinner was barred from the sanctuary and had to bear his own iniquity because of his rebellion against God. This fundamental principle is taught in *Bamidbar / Numbers 15:27-31*.

Bamidbar / Numbers 15:27-31

15:27 ‘Also if one person sins unintentionally, then he shall offer a one year old female goat for a sin offering. 15:28 ‘The priest shall make atonement before the Lord for the person who goes astray when he sins unintentionally, making atonement for him that he may be forgiven. 15:29 ‘You shall have one law for him who does anything unintentionally, for him who is native among the sons of Israel and for the alien who sojourns among them. 15:30 ‘But the person who does anything defiantly, whether he is native or an alien, that one is blaspheming the Lord; and that person shall be cut off from among his people. 15:31 ‘Because he has despised the word of the Lord and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt will be on him.’ (NASB)

In addition to this, one needed to repent of their sins. Repentance (Teshuva) is the process of turning from sin. Charity can be described as an act of living in a state of repentance. One’s life is changed from a wicked sinner to a righteous soul who lives to serve the Lord God in heaven. Relying upon the sacrifice of the Messiah Yeshua alone without having a repentant heart and a changed new life, is there really salvation in such a state? To say that we believe in God’s Messiah but do not turn from our sins, what do you think is the end result of such a person? Midrash Tehillim 57, Part 1 concludes saying, “In You will my soul take

refuge among the kingdoms so that they will not consume me utterly. Until these calamities be past, when the calamities from the kingdoms are past, You will return me to Your sanctuary where I will pray and give thanks.” Taking refuge in the Lord is to trust in Him and only by trusting in Him can our souls be at peace in the midst of the calamities that surround us on a daily basis.

Midrash Tehillim 57, Part 2 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתהיל) saying “*I will cry unto God Most High; unto God that approves the cause I have in hand (Tehillim / Psalms 57:3).*” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Rabbi Simon taught in the name of Rabbi Joshua son of Levi, Concerning three things, tithes, greeting with God’s name, and reading the Scroll of Esther, the Holy One blessed be He, approved the decree of a court on earth.*” The rabbis are discussing three things that the Lord God approves “*the cause that I have in hand,*” and say this is related to the tithe, greeting in God’s name, and a court on earth. The Torah instructs that one must give charity to the needy in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 15:7-8* “*If there is a poor man amongst you . . . open your hand wide . . .*” The Torah never specifies how much money one must give. The Law commands agricultural tithes and so a few Jewish commentators have expanded the obligation to include tithing on all income (*Talmud Bavli Tosafot Taanit 9a*). Other commentators, however, asserted that the obligation stemmed only from rabbinic decree (*Shu”t Maharil 152, שו”ת מהרי”ל החדשות*), with some even downgrading it to the level of a custom. Whatever its legal origins, traditional Jewish practice has long viewed giving 10% of one’s income as a benchmark, and 20 percent as an extremely meritorious act of charity. Traditional Jewish law and practice has included various forms of tithing since ancient times as we know according to the Torah (see *Bereshit / Genesis 14*). Orthodox Jews commonly practice ma’aser kesafim (*the tithing 10% of income to charity*). Modern Israel continues to follow the laws of agricultural tithing, e.g., *ma’aser rishon, terumat ma’aser, and ma’aser sheni*. In Christianity, some interpretations of Biblical teachings conclude that although tithing was practiced extensively in the Tanach, it was never practiced or taught within the first-century Church. Instead, the Apostolic Writings are seen as teaching the concept of “*freewill offerings*” as a means of supporting the church, for example in *1 Corinthians 16:2 and 2 Corinthians 9:7*. In fact, according to the book of Acts, a few of the earliest groups of believers sold everything they had and held the proceeds in common to be used for the furtherance of the Gospel (*Acts 2:44-47, 4:34-35*). According to *Acts 5:1-20* we read of the account of a man and wife (Ananias and Sapphira) who were living in one of these groups. They sold a piece of property and donated only part of the selling price to the church but claimed to have given the whole amount. As a result of their lie, they immediately fell down and died when confronted by the apostle Peter over their dishonesty. The tithe historically has held a very high place in the Scriptures, Christianity, and Judaism, and the rabbis continue in the midrash on the topic of the tithe saying the following.

Our masters say, Also, concerning Joshua’s ban upon the spoil of Jericho, the Holy One blessed be He, approved the ban. For after Achan violated it The Lord said unto Joshua, Get up; wherefore, now, are you fallen upon your face? Israel has sinned; yes, they have even transgressed M Covenant (Joshua 7:10-11). And the proof that God approved the decree concerning tithes? We are taught that the children of Israel were not taken in to captivity until they neglected the giving of tithes, of which Scripture ordained, These are the statutes and the ordinances, which you will observe to do in the land which the Lord has given you (Devarim / Deuteronomy 12:1). And when the children of Israel returned to the land in the time of Ezra, they observed the tithes of their own accord. Whence the proof? From the verses rabbi Johanan quoted, We made ordinances for us that we should bring our heave offerings and the tithes of our land unto the Levites (Nehemiah 10:33-38). Proof, also, from the verse, in spite of all this we make a sure covenant (Nehemiah 10:1). What is meant by the words In spite of all this? That the children of Israel said, Whether we go again into captivity or go not again into captivity, we will observe the ordinance of tithes. And whence do we know that the Holy One blessed be He, approved the decree of the children of Israel concerning tithes? Because it is said, That He subscribed, Scripture does not say, The subscribed, but that He subscribed. Hence it is said, I will cry unto God Most High; unto God that approves

The tithe is paralleled to the going into exile, the midrash states, “*And the proof that God approved the decree concerning tithes? We are taught that the children of Israel were not taken in to captivity until they neglected the giving of tithes, of which Scripture ordained, These are the statutes and the ordinances, which you will observe to do in the land which the Lord has given you (Devarim / Deuteronomy 12:1).*” Upon returning to the land of Israel, the people observed the tithe on their own accord. The rabbis continue saying that whether Israel goes into captivity or not, they will observed the tithe, and that the tithe is something that is approved of God based upon the Psalm that says “*unto God that approves the cause I have in hand.*” These concepts towards the tithe and the belief that the Lord stands behind (approves) of the one who tithes, is also found in the Apostolic Writings, according to *James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world. (NASB)* and based upon *Mishley / Proverbs 28:27 If you give to the poor, your needs will be supplied! But a curse upon those who close their eyes to poverty,* visiting and take care of the poor, widows, orphans, these things are approved of the Lord God in heaven.

The midrash continues saying the following:

Therefore, when the children of Israel again neglected the tithes, Malachi said this, will a man rob God? But you say, Wherein have we robbed You? In tithes and heave offerings (Malachi 3:8). According to rabbi Samuel son of rabbi Isaac, the Holy One blessed be He, said to the children of Israel, it is the way of the world that what the master decrees for the disciple, the disciple does. But is the master expected to do what the disciple decrees for him? Nevertheless, you made a decree for Me with respect to tithes, and I approved it with you. But then you backslid, and you robbed Me, for you neglected the tithes, as is said, Will a man rob (yikba) God? What is meant by yikba? Rabbi Levi taught that in everyday Aramaic speech when a man has occasion to say to another, Why do you rob me? He says to him, Why do you kaba me? In the further comment on yikba, Rabbi Berechiah taught in the name of rabbi Johanan that the Holy One blessed be He, said to Israel, You restrain (kaba) Me from reaching out My hand to My world, and making it prosper; so that the verse Shall a man yikba God? Means Do you presume to restrain Me? (Midrash Tehillim 57, Part 2)

The midrash equates a man who withholds a tithe as robbing God. Why do you think withholding a tithe is synonymous to robbing God? The rabbis say robbery is achieved in “*tithes and heave offerings*” (*Malachi 3:8*). The idea here is found in the neglect to obey the command. We are commanded to give a tithe, and the rabbis say that when we with hold our tithe, we restrain God’s hand from going out into the world and making the world prosper. How does withholding the tithe restrain God’s hand? It might be that when we give charity through the tithe, the person who receives the offering is blessed and they can see the Lord God working and living within you to do good towards others. Midrash Tehillim 57, Part 2 concludes saying, “*And should you say that Boaz spoke thus unto his own accord, but that in heaven they did not approve of what he said, then mark what the angel said to Gideon, The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor (Judges 6:12).*” The point of this midrash is that the Lord stands behind the man who tithes for the purpose of doing good towards others. Here Boaz and Gideon are compared. Boaz and Ruth (from the book of Ruth), the midrash states that Boaz spoke for his own accord and was not approved of God, whereas Gideon went out to fight for Israel and he was approved of God. The idea is that we are to do unto others and not for ourselves only. In the tithe, we do unto others and unto God, when we do so with a pure heart, and in doing so the Lord is pleased.

Midrash Tehillim 57, Part 3 opens with he Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “*Rabbi Tahalifa of Ceasarea taught, At the time that Saul violated the decree of the Holy One blessed be He, concerning Amalek, Samuel came and rebuked him, saying You have rejected the word of the Lord (1 Samuel 15:26);*” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*and as Samuel turned to go away, he rent Saul’s robe, as*

is said And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his robe, and it rent.” The midrash opens interestingly on a topic that is not related to *Tehillim / Psalms 57* saying that Saul violated a command of the Lord by rebuking Amalek. Amalek is the son of Eliphaz and the grandson of Esau. The Amalekites were an ancient nomadic tribe that descended from Amalek and inhabited the land of Canaan. Amalek is a figure in the Hebrew Bible mentioned in both the books of Genesis and 1 Chronicles. (*Bereshit / Genesis 36:12, 1 Chronicles 1:36*) The entire midrash states the following:

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| <p style="text-align: center;">מדרש תהלים פרק נז סימן ג</p> <p>ג אמר ר' תחליפא דמן קיסרי בשעה שעבר שאול על גזירתו של הקב"ה בעמלק, ובא שמואל והוכיחו, שנאמר יען (אשר עברת את פי ה') [מאסת את דבר ה'] (ש"א שמואל א' טו כג), וכיון שביקש לילך לו קרע לו את מעילו, שנאמר ויסב שמואל ללכת (ויאחז) [ויחזק] בכנף מעילו ויקרע ויאמר אליו שמואל קרע ה' את ממלכות ישראל מעליך היום [ונתנה לרעך הטוב ממך] (שם שמואל א' טו כז כח), אמר לו ומי הוא זה ריעי הטוב ממני שימלוך תחת, אמר ליה רמז אני רומז לך, מי שקרע את מעילך, הוא עתיד ליטול מלכותך, וכשנכנס שאול למערה, וכרת דוד כנף מעילו, מיד נזכר שאול מה שאמר לו שמואל, התחיל לומר ידעתי כי מלוך תמלוך (שם שמואל א' כד כא), מלוך בעולם הזה, תמלוך לעולם הבא, שנאמר ועבדי דוד מלך עליהם (יחזקאל לו כד).</p> | <p>Midrash Tehillim 57, Part 3</p> <p>3. Rabbi Tahalifa of Ceasarea taught, At the time that Saul violated the decree of the Holy One blessed be He, concerning Amalek, Samuel came and rebuked him, saying You have rejected the word of the Lord (1 Samuel 15:26); and as Samuel turned to go away, he rent Saul's robe, as is said And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his robe, and it rend. And Samuel said to him, The Lord has rent the kingdom of Israel from you this day, and have given it to a neighbor of yours, that is better than you (1 Samuel 15:27-28). Saul asked, And who is this neighbor of mine who is better than I, and who will rule instead of me? Samuel answered, I will give you a clue, he who rends your robe will take away the kingship. And when Saul entered into the cave, and David cut off the skirt of his robe, Saul remembered at once what Samuel had told of him. Thereupon, Saul said, I know that as king you will rule (1 Samuel 24:21). You will be king in this world, and you will rule in the world to come, for it is said, And My servant David will be king (Ezekiel 37:24).</p> |
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The midrash opens with Saul rebuking Amalek, however, the reference to *1 Samuel 15:26* indicates that he was actually speaking to Samuel. Samuel is saying to Saul that the kingdom, Israel, will be taken from him and given to another who is more worthy. Saul asks “*who is my neighbor,*” and the midrash goes on to say that Samuel gave him a clue, the one who rends his garment (*1 Samuel 24:4*), just like he rent Samuel’s garment, will be the one who will replace Saul as king. This reminds us of the passages from the Gospel of Luke and the lawyer who asked Yeshua “*who is my neighbor.*”

Luke 10:25-37

10:25 And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, ‘Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ 10:26 And He said to him, ‘What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?’ 10:27 And he answered, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.’ 10:28 And He said to him, ‘You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.’ 10:29 But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’ 10:30 Jesus replied and said, ‘A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. 10:31 ‘And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 10:32 ‘Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 10:33 ‘But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, 10:34 and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took

care of him. 10:35 'On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.' 10:36 'Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands? 10:37 And he said, 'The one who showed mercy toward him.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Go and do the same.' (NASB)

In Luke 10:29, the lawyer stood up and asked “*And who is my neighbor?*” The text suggests the lawyer was self-righteous, and possibly contentious with Yeshua’s teaching on loving your enemy previously. It is easier to hate one’s enemy than to love, and the question of the scholar is that one’s neighbor could be his enemy (e.g. the neighboring nations). As best that we can tell from the text, the lawyer was at ease with his conscience, having paid his tithes, fasting, observing the feast days carefully, never neglecting the liturgy, etc, he felt he had made for himself a place in heaven. As regards to the observance of the Torah and before God, his conscience was at ease. And so looking to justify himself, he asks, “*And who is my neighbor?*” His question asks a further question, “*Master, tell me, who do you teach should be included in the term neighbor?*” Yeshua goes on to illustrate the concept of a neighbor, in the parable of a man traveling to from Jerusalem to Jericho. It is interesting in Yeshua’s illustration he says a man is traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. What is the significance of the man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho?

When Israel crossed the Jordan and entered the Promised Land, the first city they encounter is the city of Jericho in 1451 BCE. Joshua was given strict instructions from God regarding how to take (conquer) the city. The city was surrounded by strong walls and was well fortified. The miraculous plan given Joshua was for the entire Israelite army to march around the city once each day for six days, then, on the seventh day, march around it seven times. The trumpets were then to be sounded and everyone was to give a great shout, and the walls crumbled to the ground. The army of Israel then killed all who were in the city except Rahab. The important point about this regarding Yeshua’s parable is the warning God gave following the destruction of the city in *Joshua 6:26*.

Joshua 6:26

6:26 And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it. (KJV)

The Scripture says “*Cursed be the man before the Lord that raises up and builds the city and lays its foundation, etc.*” Yeshua says in his illustration that a man was leaving Jerusalem to travel to Jericho. This illustrates for us that the man was leaving Jerusalem, the blessed city of Zion, based on the opening verse of the parable, the type of man (the neighbor) may be paralleled to a person who had left the covenant people for an accursed place (Jericho). This type of man would not be someone whom the rabbis would have taught to take care of, to be good to, or to give your time to helping, etc. This man was an unrighteous man who did not believe the Scriptures, did not love God or Israel, and was going to Jericho. Yeshua says that even such a person is your neighbor. In the midrash, Saul asks “*And who is my neighbor?*” however his question is based upon a man of God, David, who is not an unrighteous man. In Yeshua’s parable he says a priest and a Levite pass the person by, but a Samaritan, a despised people, has the heart to take care of the man who was robbed, beaten, and left for dead. The Samaritan acted as a neighbor, whereas the priest and the Levite did not. The idea is that we are to do similar, to help, and to do what is necessary to take care of our neighbor, regardless of whether the person is unrighteous, wicked, or an enemy.

Midrash Tehillim 57, Part 3 concludes saying, “*You will be king in this world, and you will rule in the world to come, for it is said, And My servant David will be king (Ezekiel 37:24).*” If we take into consideration the importance of being selfless, humble, and a servant towards others, the concluding phrase of the midrash, “*You will be king in this world and you will rule in the world to come*” is a true statement that applies to each of us as well. Do you believe this is true?

Midrash Tehillim 57, Part 4 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “*Awake, my glory*

(*Tehillim / Psalms 57:9*).” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*David said, Awake, my glory for the sake of my Master’s glory, my glory being nothing before my Makers glory.*” The MT on the opening verse states, עֹרָה כְבוֹדֵי עֹרָה הַנֶּבֶל וְכִנּוֹר אֲעִירָה שָׁחַר: 57:8 *Awake, my glory! Awake, harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn.* (NASB) The Aramaic Targum translation states, ט איתער יקרי איתער לשבחה על, 57:9 *Wake up, my glory! Wake up to praise by means of the harp and lyre; wake up for the prayer of morning.* (EMC) According to the Aramaic Targum, awaking is for the purpose of the morning prayers. The entire midrash states the following:

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| <p style="text-align: center;">מדרש תהלים פרק נז סימן ד</p> <p>ד עורה כבודי [עורה הנבל וכנור אעירה שחר]. איתער איקרי מן קומי איקרי דבריי, איקרי לא חשיב כלום, קומי אייקרי דבריי. אעירה שחר. אנא הוינא מעיר שחרא ושחרא לא הוה אית-ער לי, והיה יצרו מקטרגו, ואמר לו דוד דרכן של מלכים [להיות השחר מעוררן, ואת אמר אעירה שחר, דרכן של מלכים] להיות ישינים עד שלש שעות, ואתה אומר חצות לילה אקום להודות לך, והוא אומר (למשפטי) [על משפ-טי] צדקך, ומה היה דוד עושה, ר' פנחס בשם ר' אלעזר בר' מנחם אומר היה נוטל כנור ונבל - ונותנו תחת מראשותיו, ועומד בחצי הלילה, ומנגן בהם, כדי שישמעו חבריו בתורה ויקור-מו, ומה היו חברי תורה אומרים, ומה אם דוד המלך עוסק בתורה, אנו על אחת כמה וכמה. אמר ר' לוי כנור היה תלוי כנגד חלונותיו של דוד, והיתה רוח צפונית יוצאת בחצי הלילה ומ-נפנפת בו, והיה מנגן מאליו, הדא הוא דכתיב והיה כנגן המנגן (מ"ב מלכים ב' ג טו), במנגן אין כתיב כאן, אלא כנגן המנגן, שהיה הכנור מנגן מאליו.</p> | <p>Midrash Tehillim 57, Part 4</p> <p>4. <i>Awake, my glory (Tehillim / Psalms 57:9). David said, Awake, my glory for the sake of my Master’s glory, my glory being nothing before my Makers glory. I will awake the dawn. David said, I will awake the dawn, the dawn will not awake me. Thereupon, his inclination to evil reproached him saying, David, is it the way of the kings that the dawn awake them? Yet you declare I will awake the dawn. Though it is the way of the kings to sleep three hours into the day, you declare At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto You (Tehillim / Psalms 119:62). Thereupon, David replied, And so I will, saying to God, Because of Your righteous ordinance. What did David use to do? Rabbi Phinehas in the name of Rabbi Eleazar son of rabbi Menahem, David used to take a harp and a psaltery, put them under his head, and rise at midnight and play them, so that his companions in study of Torah would hear and rise. And what did his companions in study of Torah used to say? If King David is occupied with Torah, how much more and more should we be. Rabbi Levi taught, A harp have hung across David’s window, and when the north wind came up at midnight, it blew through the harp, which then played off of itself. Of this, it is written, when the instrument played (2 Kings 3:15), note that it is not written when minstrel played, but When the instrument played meaning that the harp played of itself.</i></p> |
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In the midrash, the rabbis say, “*David said, I will awake the dawn, the dawn will not awake me*” meaning that he will wake before the dawn rather than allowing dawn to wake him. This implies that David is awaking in anticipation for the day to pray (according to the Targum) and to sing of the glory of God (according to the MT). The midrash continues saying that his inclination to evil (יצרו מקטרגו) reproached him saying that it is the way of kings that the dawn awakes them. Notice here that the midrash does not use the typical phrase in the Hebrew text “*Yetzer Hara*” (יצר הרע) to describe the evil inclination, but rather they say “*Yetser Maktargu*” יצרו מקטרגו. The word Maktargu (מקטרגו) is a masculine noun meaning “*accuser; prosecutor*” and the idea is that the inclination to evil is functioning as an accuser making the accusation that if you are a king, you need to sleep in and allow the sun rise to wake you and not the other way around. In other words, kings are supposed to be lazy and not raise until the sun comes up. David on the other hand prefers to rise before the sun does.

The midrash continues saying the following:

Thereupon, David replied, And so I will, saying to God, Because of Your righteous ordi-

nance. What did David use to do? Rabbi Phinehas in the name of Rabbi Eleazar son of rabbi Menahem, David used to take a harp and a psaltery, put them under his head, and rise at midnight and play them, so that his companions in study of Torah would hear and rise. And what did his companions in study of Torah used to say? If King David is occupied with Torah, how much more and more should we be. Rabbi Levi taught, A harp have hung across David's window, and when the north wind came up at midnight, it blew through the harp, which then played off of itself.

The point of the midrash is that David rises early to pray, to sing, and to give glory to the Lord, and occupy himself in the study of the Torah. Torah study generally is performed in a specific place, the beit Midrash or house of study, a room is designated or set aside for this purpose. Times are chosen during the week or during the day for study. Studying the Torah begins with a prayer thanking God for “*commanding us to occupy ourselves with the words of the Torah*” with another prayer asking the Lord to enable us and our descendants to enjoy the knowledge of God through the study of His Torah. Studying the Torah focuses not on a simple absorption of the material in the bible, but on a dialogue among students and between students and the text. This type of study is standardized by the page layout of many classical texts such as is found in the Talmud. Midrash Tehillim 57 suggests that David raised early to pray and to study the Torah with his friends which is consistent with the dialogue type style of study today. The question might be asked though, “*Why Study the Torah?*” The best answer for this question is that the Torah is full of both spiritual and physical concepts about how to “*Love our neighbors as ourselves and how to love God.*” In addition to this, studying Torah gives us the knowledge that we do sin and we are in need of a savior. Over the course of time, little sins tend to not bother us as much, and as a result, we tend to compromise our faith here and there. The study of the Torah draws us back to the way of the Lord and puts in our minds and our hearts the need to repent and turn from our sins. The midrash states that David played his harp so his friends would hear, wake up and study too. Rabbi Levi taught that David hung his harp across the window so that when the wind blew, it would play music by itself. Midrash Tehillim 57, Part 4 concludes saying, “*Of this, it is written, when the instrument played (2 Kings 3:15), note that it is not written when minstrel played, but When the instrument played meaning that the harp played of itself.*” The harp playing on its own in the concluding phrase may be paralleled to the Lord being pleased with David for raising early to pray and to study. Do you think the Lord is pleased when we study His word like we read here in the midrash? I believe that He is pleased when we have a desire to draw near by the study of His word. Let's Pray!

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for the insights from the rabbis that help us to examine our lives and our walk before You. Lord we ask that You would have mercy on us, forgive us for our sins, help us to live righteous lives, and increase our faith in You and in Yeshua Your Son. Give us the strength to overcome sin, to have true hearts to seek Your righteousness and truth. Give us the strength to live for You each day and to bring Glory to Your Name! Help us to set our minds on those things that are wholesome and righteous with a desire to show mercy and love toward one another. We thank You Lord for sending Your son Yeshua that we may enter into the covenant of peace that You have promised to Your people. Help us to grow in our faith, to walk in the spirit, and apply these truths to our lives. We praise Your Holy Name and give You all of the honor, and the glory, and the praise forever and ever.

In Yeshua's (Jesus') Name we pray! Amen!

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever

Notes